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A client's skin type and condition should determine the type of mask that's chosen, as each type of mask is designed and formulated to treat a specific issue and concern. According to Rhonda Allison Cosmeceuticals's Shannon Esau, many clay masks contain bentonite or kaolin, which are powerful rejuvenators, particularly for blemished skin. "Bentonite clay is highly absorptive and binds to and draws out heavy metals and other toxins from the skin," she says. "It also absorbs excess oil, reduces surface shine, and provides soothing and healing benefits. Kaolin, also known as China clay, works wonders at absorbing sebum, removing impurities from the skin, and preventing clogged pores." When selecting a cream mask, Esau recommends one that incorporates either milk protein, which has a positive effect on traumatized skin and supports the wound repair process, or herbs of rosemary and basil, as these reduce inflammation and purify the skin. Also, wasabi, a natural stimulant that softens and detoxifies, is effective in treating acneic skin, and chocolate extract, a potent antioxidant, is great for recharging the skin. For powder-based masks, Esau suggests albumin (egg whites), pearl powder, and blue lotus powder to improve the skin's overall health. "Albumin works to actively firm and condition the skin, pearl powder provides antibacterial and detoxification properties, and blue lotus powder helps inhibit free radical damage while providing anti-inflammatory and antibacterial support," she says. ●

## behind THE mask

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